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AUTHOR Torney-Purta, Judith; Lehmann, Rainer; Oswald, Hans; Schulz, Wolfram

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ABSTRACT

This is an Executive Summary for "Citizenship and Education in Twenty-eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen," the first report of the results of the second phase of the Civic Education Study conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). The Executive Summary briefly discusses rationale and method and lists 12 major findings of the 1999 IEA Civic Education Study. Contains 3 figures and 2 tables. (BT)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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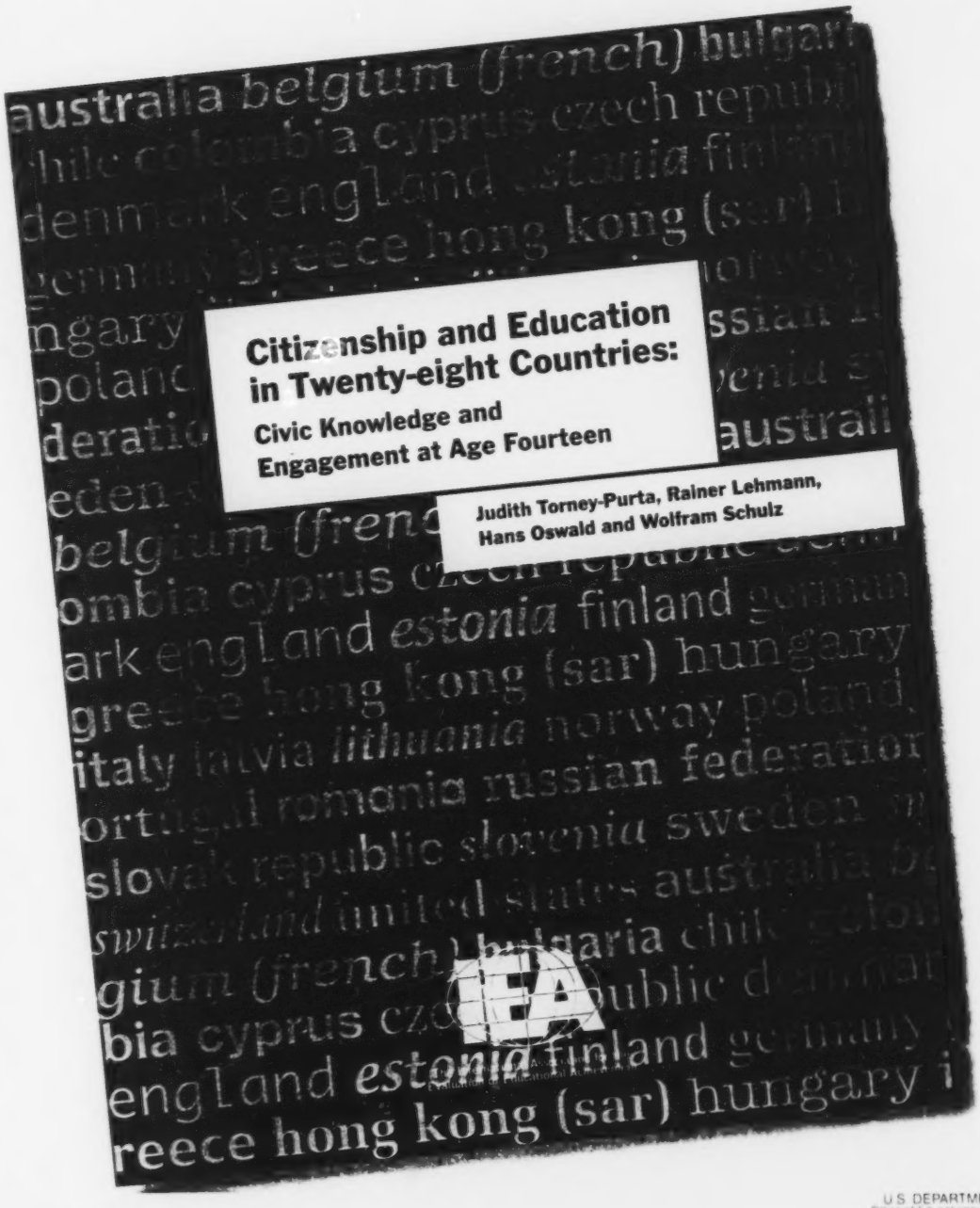
Citizenship and Education in Twenty-eight Countries:
Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen
Judith Torney-Purta, Rainer Lehmann, Hans Oswald and Wolfram Schulz
IEA

SO 032 624

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The Organization Conducting the Study:

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, known as IEA, is an independent, international consortium of national research institutions and governmental research agencies, with headquarters in Amsterdam. Its primary purpose is to conduct large-scale comparative studies of educational achievement with the aim of gaining more in-depth understanding of the effects of policies and practices within and across systems of education.

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International Steering Committee for the IEA Civic Education Study:

Judith Torney-Purta, Chair
University of Maryland, College Park, USA

Barbara Fratczak-Rudnicka, *Warsaw University, Poland*
Georgia Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides, *University of Athens, Greece*
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Lee Wing On, *Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong (SAR)*

Ray Adams *(ex-officio), IEA Technical Executive Group*
Heinrich Mintrop *(consultant)*

International Coordinating Center for the IEA Civic Education Study:

Rainer Lehmann, International Coordinator
Wolfram Schulz, Associate International Coordinator
Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Citizenship and Education in Twenty-eight Countries:

Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen

Judith Torney-Purta, Rainer Lehmann, Hans Oswald and Wolfram Schulz

This is an Executive Summary for the first report of the results of the IEA Civic Education Study conducted in 1999 (known also as the IEA Civ-Ed Study). The full report is entitled ***Citizenship and Education in Twenty-eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen***, and it is authored by Judith Torney-Purta (University of Maryland, College Park), Rainer Lehmann (Humboldt University of Berlin), Hans Oswald (Potsdam University), and Wolfram Schulz (Humboldt University of Berlin) with a chapter by Bruno Losito and Heinrich Mintrop. It was published in 2001 by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Changing Faces of Democracy

What do young people around the world think about democracy? Do they understand how democratic institutions work? Do they expect to vote and to take part in other civic activities as adults?

These questions have taken on new urgency over the last decade in response to powerful forces that have transformed – and continue to transform – democratic institutions around the world. New democratic nations have come into being while the values and attitudes of young people in long-established democracies are evolving in new directions. Youth culture across the world has nurtured not only shared consumer tastes but widespread aspirations for freedom. An enhanced emphasis on individual choice has challenged long-standing notions of youth as passive recipients of lessons from their elders.

Rethinking Civic Education

These changes raise both new challenges and new opportunities for countries seeking to nourish and preserve democratic values and institutions. New global realities call for a major reconsideration by educators and policy makers of how young people are being prepared to participate in democratic societies in the early 21st century.

A clear understanding of how schools are currently promoting civic knowledge, attitudes, and involvement is central to thinking about civic education for the future. School programs are organized differently in different countries, ranging from courses labeled civic education to approaches where civic-related material is embedded in history courses or spread throughout the curriculum. Further, effective civic education involves working within networks that include parents, local communities, and peers.

In order to promote such understanding, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) mounted a cross-national Civic Education Study that examined educational programs and the impact that they are having on young people in 28 democratic nations. Participating countries are shown in Panel 1.

Panel 1

Participating Countries

Australia
Belgium (French)
Bulgaria
Chile
Colombia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
England
Estonia
Finland
Germany
Greece
Hong Kong (SAR)
Hungary
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russian Federation
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
Sweden
Switzerland
United States

The IEA, whose headquarters are in Amsterdam, is an independent cooperative consortium of research institutes and agencies in more than 50 countries. Beginning in the late 1950s, the consortium has carried out approximately 20 large-scale cross-national studies of educational achievement in various curriculum areas with the goal of discerning the impact of policies and practices within and across national systems of education. Recent studies have included an international study of reading literacy (conducted in 1991) and the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, known as TIMSS (conducted in 1995 with a follow-up study, TIMSS-R, in 1999).

An Ambitious New Project

The 1999 IEA Civic Education Study, the first IEA study in this subject-area since 1971, was as ambitious in concept as it was massive in scope. Despite initial skepticism about the possibility of doing so across diverse political systems, IEA researchers working in a collaborative process demonstrated that there is a core of agreement across democratic societies regarding important topics in civic education. They showed that it is possible to construct a meaningful, reliable, and valid international test of student knowledge about fundamental democratic principles and processes, as well as a survey of concepts of citizenship, attitudes, and civic-related activities. Questions about governmental structures specific to individual nations were not included in the international test.

The study was carried out in two phases. In the first phase, researchers conducted qualitative case studies that examined the contexts and meaning of civic education in 24 countries. The case studies were published in ***Civic Education across Countries: Twenty-four National Case Studies from the IEA Civic Education Project.***[1] The observations from the case studies were then used to develop both a test of students' civic knowledge and a survey of their civic engagement whose results were suitable for rigorous statistical analysis. In the second phase, nationally representative samples of nearly 90,000 students in the usual grade for 14-year-olds in 28 countries were surveyed on topics ranging from their knowledge of fundamental democratic principles and skills in interpreting political information to their attitudes toward government and willingness to participate in civic activity.

The data-gathering was carried out in 1999 by teams in each country guided by policies and technical guidelines established by IEA. Data collection and other work at the national level was funded by governments and foundations within each participating country. Funding for international coordination of the study has been provided by agencies and foundations in Germany and the United States, as well as by IEA. The International Coordinating Center is located at the Humboldt University of Berlin, where the International Coordinator is a faculty member. The International Steering Committee Chair is a faculty member at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Major Findings of the Civic Education Study

An underlying assumption of this study was that civic education is a complex enterprise involving a variety of cognitive, conceptual and attitudinal strands, each of which is important and can be independently evaluated. Students were thus assessed concerning their knowledge of civic content, their skills in interpreting civic information, their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of democracy, their concepts of the role of citizens, their attitudes toward democratic institutions and individual rights, and whether they intended to become involved in civic activities such as voting when they became adults.

Another assumption of the study was that, given these multiple objectives, an effective civic education program must employ a variety of educational approaches. Students learn through didactic instruction, through discussion and debate, and through experience with parents, peers and others in their local communities. Each of these elements has a place in civic education designed to meet the needs of today's students.

[1] Edited by J. Torney-Purta, J. Schwille, and J. Amadeo, and published in 1999 by IEA in Amsterdam

Summary of the major findings of the 1999 IEA Civic Education Study:

1. Students in most countries have an understanding of fundamental democratic values and institutions – but depth of understanding is a problem.

The study found that 14-year-old students in most of the 28 participating countries understand fundamental democratic ideals and processes. For example, 75 percent of student respondents in the international sample were able to identify the reason for having more than one political party, while 69 percent correctly answered a question on the importance of being able to join a variety of organizations.

Most students were able to answer questions dealing with fundamental laws and political rights, and most recognized the importance of basic democratic institutions such as free elections. Fourteen-year-olds in these countries believe that democracy is weakened when wealthy people have undue influence on government, when politicians influence the courts, and when people are forbidden to express ideas critical of the government.

On the other hand, understanding of democratic values and institutions is often superficial. Only 57 percent could identify the main message of a cartoon about a country's wish to de-emphasize problematic aspects of its history. A similar proportion could infer the consequences of a large publisher buying many newspapers.

Students show moderate skill in interpreting political materials. For example, 65 percent of respondents were able to identify the position of a party that had issued a mock electoral leaflet, while a substantial 35 percent could not do so (Figure 1).

Figure 2 shows how each of the participating countries fared in terms of overall civic knowledge. This figure shows which countries' means were, in terms of statistical significance, above, at, or below the international mean. (Most differences between countries within these three groups are not significant.) The differences between countries are similar in size to those found in previous IEA cross-national studies of reading literacy, but they are not as large as those found in previous studies in mathematics, such as TIMSS.

There are no simple explanations for differences in the level of civic knowledge among the various countries. The high-performing group includes not only long-standing democracies but also nations that are consolidating democracy and that have experienced massive political transitions during the lifetimes of these 14-year-olds. In almost all the participating countries, students from homes with more books demonstrate more civic knowledge, as do students who have high levels of aspiration for future education.

Figure 1

Item Example

Country	Correct Answers (in %)	
Australia	78	(1.3)
Belgium (French)	56	(1.8)
Bulgaria	47	(2.4)
Chile	54	(1.5)
Colombia	40	(2.4)
Cyprus	81	(0.9)
Czech Republic	66	(1.6)
Denmark	49	(1.1)
England	75	(1.2)
Estonia	54	(1.4)
Finland	85	(0.8)
Germany	81	(0.9)
Greece	73	(1.3)
Hong Kong (SAR)	76	(1.4)
Hungary	78	(1.2)
Italy	85	(1.2)
Latvia	44	(1.9)
Lithuania	55	(1.6)
Norway	57	(0.9)
Poland	58	(2.0)
Portugal	55	(1.3)
Romania	46	(2.0)
Russian Federation	45	(1.9)
Slovak Republic	66	(1.6)
Slovenia	75	(1.0)
Sweden	73	(1.5)
Switzerland	77	(1.3)
United States	83	(1.4)
International Sample	65	(0.3)

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

* Correct answer.

THIS IS AN ELECTION LEAFLET. . .

We citizens have had enough!

A vote for the Silver Party means a vote for higher taxes.

It means an end to economic growth and

a waste of our nation's resources.

It means an end to economic growth and free enterprise.

Vote for more money left in everyone's wallet!

Let's not waste another 4 years!

VOTE FOR THE GOLD PARTY.

23. This is an election leaflet which has probably been issued by . . .

A. the Silver Party.

B. a party or group in opposition to the Silver Party.*

C. a group which tries to be sure elections are fair.

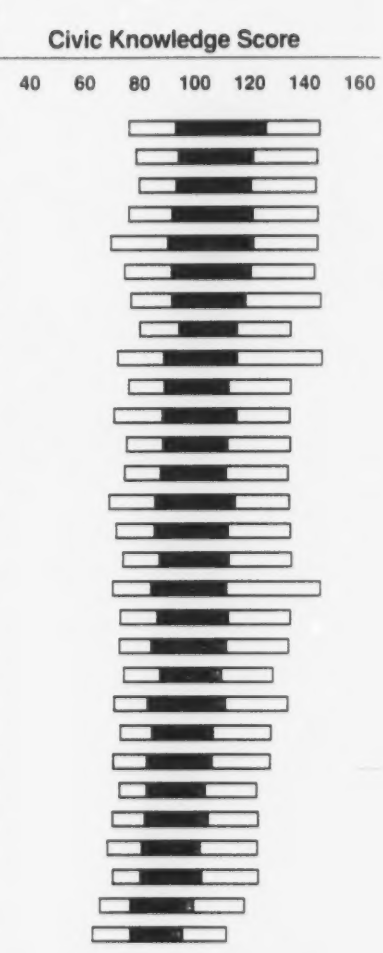
D. the Silver Party and the Gold Party together.

Source: IEA Civic Education Study. Standard Population of 14-year-olds tested in 1999.

Figure 2

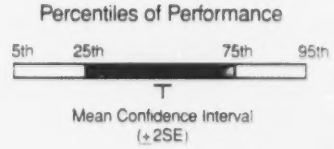
Distributions of Civic Knowledge

Country		Mean Scale Score		Testing Date	Tested Grade	Mean Age
Poland	▲	111	(1.7)	5/99 - 6/99	8	15.0
Finland	▲	109	(0.7)	4/99	8	14.8
Cyprus	▲	108	(0.5)	5/99	9	14.8
Greece	▲	108	(0.8)	3/99 - 6/99	9	14.7
Hong Kong (SAR)[3]	▲	107	(1.1)	6/99 - 7/99	9	15.3
United States[1]	▲	106	(1.2)	10/99	9	14.7
Italy	▲	105	(0.8)	4/99 - 5/99	9	15.0
Slovak Republic	▲	105	(0.7)	5/99 - 6/99	8	14.3
Norway[4]	▲	103	(0.5)	4/99 - 6/99	8	14.8
Czech Republic	▲	103	(0.8)	4/99 - 5/99	8	14.4
Australia	○	102	(0.8)	8/99	9	14.6
Hungary	○	102	(0.6)	3/99	8	14.4
Slovenia	○	101	(0.5)	4/99	8	14.8
Denmark[4]	○	100	(0.5)	4/99	8	14.8
International sample	○	**100**	**(0.2)**	**3/99 - 12/99**	**8/9**	**14.7**
Germany[2]	○	100	(0.5)	4/99 - 7/99	8	n.a.
Russian Federation[3]	○	100	(1.3)	4/99 - 5/99	9	15.1
England[1]	○	99	(0.6)	11/99	9	14.7
Sweden[1]	○	99	(0.8)	10/99 - 12/99	8	14.3
Switzerland	○	98	(0.8)	4/99 - 7/99	8/9	15.0
Bulgaria	○	98	(1.3)	5/99 - 6/99	8	14.9
Portugal[5]	▼	96	(0.7)	4/99	8	14.5
Belgium (French)[4]	▼	95	(0.9)	3/99 - 4/99	8	14.1
Estonia	▼	94	(0.5)	4/99	8	14.7
Lithuania	▼	94	(0.7)	5/99	8	14.8
Romania	▼	92	(0.9)	5/99	8	14.8
Latvia	▼	92	(0.9)	4/99 - 5/99	8	14.5
Chile	▼	88	(0.7)	10/99	8	14.3
Colombia	▼	86	(0.9)	4/99 and 10/99	8	14.6



( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

▲ Country mean significantly ***higher*** than international mean.
○ No statistically significant difference between country mean and international mean.
▼ Country mean significantly ***lower*** than international mean.



1 Countries with testing date at beginning of school year.
2 National Desired Population does not cover all International Desired Population.
3 Countries did not meet age/grade specification.
4 Countries overall participation rate after replacement less than 85 percent.
5 In Portugal grade 8 selected instead of grade 9 due to average age. Mean scale score for grade 9 was 106.

Source : IEA Civic Education Study. Standard Population of 14-year-olds tested in 1999.

2. **Young people agree that good citizenship includes the obligation to vote.**

Fourteen-year-olds in the participating countries agree that it is important for citizens to obey the law and to vote. Eighty percent of all respondents indicated that they expect to vote as adults – with the percentages ranging from 55 percent in Switzerland to 95 percent in Cyprus (Table 1). Some other types of participation are also relatively popular.

It should be noted that in many countries there is a gap between the proportion of students who indicate their intention to vote and actual practices reflected in statistics on young adults' voting rates. Certainly a 14-year-old's intent to vote may be weakened by later experience. Nevertheless, adolescence is a good time to impart the idea that voting is important. Otherwise a major opportunity has been lost for schools to have a positive influence on civic participation.

3. **Students with the most civic knowledge are most likely to be open to participate in civic activities.**

Data from all participating countries show a positive correlation between civic knowledge and participation in democratic life. Specifically, the more students know about fundamental democratic processes and institutions, the more likely they are to expect to vote when they become adults.

Curricular priorities within schools play an important role in shaping expected behavior. When students perceive that their schools teach the importance of voting, the proportion who say they are likely to vote increases. Although a majority of teachers in most countries reported that they cover the importance of voting as part of the curriculum, only a bare majority (55 percent) of students said that they have learned in school about "the importance of voting in national and local elections."

4. **Schools that model democratic practice are most effective in promoting civic knowledge and engagement.**

Educational practices play an important role in preparing students for citizenship. Schools that model democratic values by promoting an open climate for discussing issues and inviting students to take part in shaping school life are effective in promoting both civic knowledge and engagement. In three-quarters of the countries surveyed, students who reported having such experiences in their classrooms show greater civic knowledge, and they are more likely to expect to vote as adults than other students. This finding, that an open climate for classroom discussion enhances civic knowledge and engagement, is consistent with results from the 1971 IEA Civic Education Study.

Despite the documented effectiveness of an open and participatory climate in promoting civic knowledge and engagement, this approach is by no means the norm in most countries. About one-

Table 1

Students' Reports on Expected Activities as an Adult

Country	Percent of Students who expect probably or definitely to. . . vote in national elections		collect money for a social cause or charity	
Australia	85	(1.0)	62	(1.3)
Belgium (French)	69	(2.0)	47	(1.8)
Bulgaria	58	(1.9)	51	(1.6)
Chile	74	(1.0)	85	(0.9)
Colombia	87	(1.3)	79	(1.3)
Cyprus	95	(0.5)	82	(0.7)
Czech Republic	65	(1.7)	28	(1.0)
Denmark	91	(0.7)	51	(1.3)
England	80	(1.0)	57	(1.2)
Estonia	68	(1.1)	41	(1.2)
Finland	87	(0.7)	45	(1.3)
Germany	67	(1.1)	54	(1.2)
Greece	86	(0.9)	79	(0.9)
Hong Kong (SAR)	80	(1.0)	78	(0.9)
Hungary	91	(0.7)	46	(1.2)
Italy	80	(1.1)	65	(1.2)
Latvia	71	(1.3)	57	(1.6)
Lithuania	80	(1.1)	49	(1.1)
Norway	87	(0.7)	68	(1.1)
Poland	88	(1.2)	57	(1.7)
Portugal	88	(0.8)	74	(1.0)
Romania	82	(1.1)	73	(1.2)
Russian Federation	82	(1.0)	56	(1.4)
Slovak Republic	93	(0.6)	40	(1.3)
Slovenia	84	(1.0)	68	(1.0)
Sweden	75	(1.4)	42	(1.3)
Switzerland	55	(1.3)	55	(1.2)
United States	85	(1.0)	59	(1.5)
International Sample	**80**	**(0.2)**	**59**	**(0.2)**

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Percentages based on valid responses.

Source : IEA Civic Education Study, Standard Population of 14-year-olds tested in 1999.

quarter of the students say that they are often encouraged to voice their opinions during discussions in their classrooms, but an equal proportion say that this rarely or never occurs. Teacher responses across many countries confirm what students themselves say. Teacher-centered methods, such as the use of textbooks, recitation, and worksheets, are dominant in civic-related classrooms in most countries, although there are also opportunities for discussion of issues.

5. **Aside from voting, students are skeptical about traditional forms of political engagement. But many are open to other types of involvement in civic life.**

Except for voting, students are unlikely to think that conventional political participation is particularly important. An overwhelming four out of five students in all countries indicated that they do not intend to participate in the conventional political activities generally associated with adult political involvement: joining a party, writing letters to newspapers about social and political concerns, and being a candidate for a local or city office.

Nevertheless, students across the various countries are open to forms of civic and political engagement unrelated to electoral politics or parties. On average, 59 percent of students reported that they expect to collect money for a social cause (Table 1). On average, 44 percent said that they would participate in a non-violent protest march. Respondents were also very likely to endorse adults participating in environmental or community betterment organizations as a way to demonstrate good citizenship.

Only a minority of students reported that they are likely to engage in protest activities that are illegal in most countries, such as spray-painting slogans on walls, blocking traffic, and occupying buildings.

6. **Youth organizations have untapped potential to positively influence the civic preparation of young people.**

Students prefer to belong to organizations in which they can work with peers and see results from their efforts. Such organizations can have positive effects on civic knowledge, attitudes and future engagement by giving students opportunities for participation in settings that matter to them.

Fourteen-year-olds generally believe that actions taken by groups of students can be effective in school improvement. Participating in a school council or parliament is positively related to civic knowledge in about one-third of the countries. Such experiences, however, are not available in some schools.

Students in about two-thirds of the countries report that they are involved in voluntary organizations with a civic dimension. In the other one-third of the countries, however, there is a low level of participation.

7. Students are drawn to television as their source of news.

Although the amount of news programming available to students varies widely from country to country, students are consumers of what is accessible to them. Among 14-year-olds in almost all nations, news broadcasts on television are the most prominent sources of political information, with 86 percent of respondents indicating that they sometimes or often tune in. Newspapers rank second (68 percent) followed by news broadcasts on the radio (55 percent) (Table 2).

In nearly all countries, students who view news frequently are also more likely to say that they intend to vote. The frequency of watching news programs on television is positively associated with higher civic knowledge in about half the participating countries.

In most countries, a majority of the students express trust in media sources. Overall, news presented on television is trusted by the most respondents (62 percent), followed by news on the radio (54 percent) and news in newspapers (52 percent), with levels of trust varying from country to country. One exception to this overall pattern is the United States, where newspapers are the most trusted news medium.

8. Patterns of trust in government-related institutions vary widely among countries.

The legitimacy of democratic governments depends heavily on a sense of trust on the part of their citizens. Fourteen-year-olds are already members of a political culture, and their responses to the survey demonstrate levels of trust and concepts of the social and economic responsibilities of government that largely correspond to those of adults in their societies found in other research. Specifically, students across countries are moderately trusting of their government institutions. The courts and the police are trusted the most, followed by national and local governments. By contrast, political parties are trusted the least.

Most young people also seem to have a positive sense of national identity. In almost all the participating countries the average young person expressed trust and attachment either to the country as a political community, to government institutions or to both.

Table 2

Students' Reports on Their Exposure to Political News

Country	Percent of Students who sometimes or often... read newspaper articles about own country		listen to news broadcasts on television		listen to news broadcasts on the radio	
Australia	65	(1.2)	80	(0.8)	63	(1.1)
Belgium (French)	60	(1.5)	81	(1.1)	56	(1.4)
Bulgaria	72	(1.4)	73	(1.7)	47	(1.4)
Chile	61	(1.1)	89	(0.6)	47	(1.1)
Colombia	77	(1.3)	92	(0.7)	56	(2.3)
Cyprus	68	(1.1)	89	(0.6)	55	(1.2)
Czech Republic	69	(1.1)	94	(0.5)	60	(1.2)
Denmark	65	(1.1)	83	(0.7)	47	(1.2)
England	70	(1.2)	78	(0.9)	55	(0.8)
Estonia	75	(1.0)	84	(0.8)	70	(0.9)
Finland	73	(1.0)	89	(0.8)	45	(1.1)
Germany	68	(1.0)	83	(0.7)	65	(1.0)
Greece	57	(1.1)	89	(0.7)	42	(1.1)
Hong Kong (SAR)	73	(0.9)	87	(0.7)	59	(0.9)
Hungary	61	(1.2)	90	(0.6)	59	(0.9)
Italy	62	(1.2)	90	(0.7)	41	(1.0)
Latvia	69	(1.4)	89	(1.0)	62	(1.4)
Lithuania	71	(1.0)	84	(0.8)	52	(1.1)
Norway	82	(0.9)	90	(0.6)	47	(1.1)
Poland	73	(0.9)	91	(0.6)	71	(1.3)
Portugal	69	(1.0)	93	(0.5)	55	(1.0)
Romania	60	(1.5)	86	(0.8)	62	(1.3)
Russian Federation	75	(1.4)	89	(0.7)	57	(1.8)
Slovak Republic	71	(1.1)	92	(0.6)	58	(1.0)
Slovenia	65	(1.1)	84	(1.0)	56	(1.2)
Sweden	79	(1.2)	84	(1.2)	47	(1.2)
Switzerland	65	(1.1)	84	(0.9)	59	(1.0)
United States	62	(1.3)	79	(1.1)	44	(1.6)
International Sample	68	(0.2)	86	(0.2)	55	(0.2)

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Percentages based on valid responses.

Source : IEA Civic Education Study, Standard Population of 14-year-olds tested in 1999.

9. Students are supportive of the political rights of women and of immigrants.

Students in the countries surveyed have generally positive attitudes toward the political and economic rights of women. More than 55 percent of respondents *strongly agreed* – and an additional 30 to 35 percent *agreed* – with items about women having the same rights as men and being entitled to equal pay for the same job. There appears to be somewhat more support for the political and economic rights of women than was found in the 1971 IEA Civic Education Survey.

Ninety percent of respondents agree that immigrants should have the right to equal educational opportunity. Slightly more than three-quarters also agree that immigrants should have the right to maintain their customs, to retain their language, and to vote. There are, however, some national differences.

In all countries, female students are much more likely than male students to support rights for women, and in many countries there are also gender differences (in the same direction) in support for immigrants' rights.

10. Gender differences are minimal with regard to civic knowledge but substantial in some attitudes.

When other factors, such as expected education, are held constant, female students have slightly lower civic knowledge than males in about one-third of countries. When the comparison is made without holding other factors constant, however, there are sizeable gender differences in only one country. Females express a greater willingness than males to vote in about one-fifth of the countries. Fourteen-year-old males and females possess similar concepts of democracy and government responsibility and also express similar levels of trust in most countries. As noted above, females in all countries are more supportive than males of rights for immigrants and women.

Fourteen-year-olds are only moderately interested in political issues, with females expressing less interest than males in most countries. Females are more likely to collect money for and be involved with social causes; in some countries they are more likely than males to believe that adult citizens should be involved in such activities. Males are more willing to engage in illegal protest behavior than females.

11. Teachers recognize the importance of civic education in preparing young people for citizenship.

The first phase of the study, using case studies, concluded that civic education is a low status subject in many countries. In this second phase, teachers were surveyed on the importance of civic education. Nearly all civic-related teachers in most countries agreed that teaching civic education "makes a difference for students' political and civic development" and that such teaching "matters a

great deal for our country." While these teachers accept the notion that civic-related topics should be taught in schools, there is no overwhelming sentiment, except in a few countries, that civic education should be a distinct subject-area.

Teachers of civic education across countries come to the field from a wide variety of subject-matter backgrounds, typically history. In many of the post-Communist countries that have experienced major regime changes large numbers of teachers appear to have moved into the civic education field during the last decade and a half. The study found that civic education teachers across countries are confident about their ability to prepare students for citizenship and appear to be responsive to the needs and interests of their students as well as to curricular guidelines.

There is, however, some conflict between vision and practical realities. Teachers tend to have a vision of civic education that emphasizes critical thinking, but they report that, in practice, their most frequent instructional mode involves transmission of factual knowledge through textbooks, recitation and worksheets. Teachers in many countries also say that civic education would be improved if they had better materials, more subject-matter training, and more instructional time.

12. Diverse patterns of civic knowledge and attitudes toward democratic participation are found in both newly-democratic countries and long-established democracies.

The 1999 IEA Civic Education Study found substantial variation among participating countries in patterns involving nearly all of the strands that were studied. Students in some countries earned high scores on civic knowledge but showed little support for the rights of immigrants or women. Some countries were low in knowledge but high on measures of civic engagement – and visa-versa. A summary of these patterns can be found in Figure 3.

One question relates to the knowledge levels of students in newly democratic countries as compared to those of students in long-established democracies. There is no simple answer to this question. As shown in Figure 3, countries whose students demonstrated a high level of civic knowledge include three post-Communist nations: Poland, the Czech Republic, and the Slovak Republic. On the other hand, Romania and the three Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were significantly below the international mean. A number of the well-established democracies can also be found among the countries with high and low performance.

Patterns of potential engagement also show diversity. Countries where students express a relatively strong belief in the importance of political participation include both new and well-established democracies. For example, ratings of the importance of conventional citizenship participation for

Figure 3

Civic Knowledge, Civic Engagement, and Civic Attitudes Across Countries

Country	Civic Knowledge	Civic Engagement		Civic Attitudes		
	Total Civic Knowledge	Conventional Citizenship	Expected Participation in Political Activities	Trust in Government-related Institutions	Positive Attitudes Towards Immigrants	Support for Women's Political Rights
Australia		▼	▼	▲		▲
Belgium (French)	▼	▼	▼			
Bulgaria		▲		▼	▼	▼
Chile	▼	▲	▲		▲	▼
Colombia	▼	▲	▲		▲	
Cyprus	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Czech Republic	▲	▼	▼	▼		
Denmark		▼	▼	▲	▼	▲
England		▼	▼		▼	▲
Estonia	▼	▼		▼	▼	▼
Finland	▲	▼	▼			▲
Germany		▼	▼		▼	▲
Greece	▲	▲		▲	▲	
Hong Kong (SAR)	▲		▲		▲	▼
Hungary			▼		▼	▼
Italy	▲	▲	▼		▼	
Latvia	▼		▲	▼	▼	▼
Lithuania	▼	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Norway	▲	▼	▼	▲	▲	▲
Poland	▲	▲	▲		▲	
Portugal	▼	▲	▲	▼	▲	
Romania	▼	▲	▲			▼
Russian Federation		▼		▼		▼
Slovak Republic	▲	▲	▼	▲	▼	▼
Slovenia		▼		▼	▼	
Sweden		▼	▼		▲	▲
Switzerland		▼	▼	▲	▼	▲
United States	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲

▲ Country mean significantly ***higher*** than international mean.

▼ Country mean significantly ***lower*** than international mean.

Source:IEA Civic Education Study, Standard Population of 14-years-olds tested in 1999.

adults are above the international mean in Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic, and the United States.

In these data, students from countries with less than 40 years of continuous democracy show lower trust in government-related institutions. Indeed, all of the countries whose students are significantly below the international mean on this scale fell into this category. It appears that 14-year-olds in these countries, who have themselves lived most of their lives under a democratic system, have levels of mistrust of government institutions similar to those of adults surveyed in other research.

Looking Ahead

This international report will be followed by national reports that give participating countries further opportunities to examine their own students' positions in relation to the various dimensions identified and measured in the 1999 IEA Civic Education Study. Such analyses will give policy makers, educators, and the public at large a valuable tool to guide the kind of civic education required for equipping the next generation of citizens with the knowledge, skills, and values required to preserve and extend democratic forms of government in the 21st century.

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International Coordinator, International Coordinating Center:
Rainer Lehmann
Humboldt University of Berlin
Philosophische Fakultät IV
Abteilung Empirische Bildungsforschung
Unter den Linden 6
10099 Berlin
Germany
Phone: 49 30 2093 4132 ; *Fax:* 49 30 2093 4153
Web Address: http://www2.hu-berlin.de/empir_bf/iea_e.html
Email: rainer.lehmann@educat.hu-berlin.de

International Steering Committee Chair:
Judith Torney-Purta
University of Maryland, College Park
Department of Human Development
College of Education
Benjamin Building 3304
College Park, MD 20742
USA
Phone: 1 301 405 2806; *Fax:* 1 301 405 2891
Web Address: http://www.wam.umd.edu/~iea/
Email: jt22@umail.umd.edu